BioSpectrum the business of Bio & Health Sciences ASIA EDITION

Twist Bioscience partners with BioBricks Foundation to provide public-benefit genes

19 June 2017 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

This agreement will help provide 10,000 genes to the synthetic biology community.

Singapore- Twist Bioscience, a US based company accelerating science and innovation through DNA synthesis, and the BioBricks Foundation, a charity focussed on advance biotechnology announced a ground-breaking agreement to provide 10,000 genes to the synthetic biology community.

Under the terms of the agreement, the BioBricks Foundation (BBF) will pay for synthesis of 10,000 genes from Twist Bioscience. The BBF will moderate a free and open online forum that allows researchers anywhere to suggest which genes should be built. Genes garnering enough "up votes" that are determined to be of public benefit may then be prioritized for selection by BBF. Twist Bioscience will apply its normal safety and security screenings to these sequences. Once manufactured, the genes will be made freely available by the BBF via the terms of the Open Material Transfer Agreement (OpenMTA). The BBF-Twist Bioscience agreement represents the first time that multiple genome-equivalents of synthetic DNA will be made available at no cost to the research community.

"Most of biotechnology has yet to be imagined let alone made true," said Drew Endy, Ph.D., associate professor of bioengineering at Stanford University and president of the BioBricks Foundation. "By enabling everyone to work together to create a free-to-use dictionary of genes, we believe that many more people will be able to benefit from biology and be enabled as "citizens" of biotechnology. We are thrilled to be working with Twist Bioscience, the only company able to provide DNA at this scale and quality. Importantly, this publicly available DNA enabled by Twist Bioscience will serve as an educational means for the larger community to explore the use of synthetic DNA and help drive future demand."

"We are currently in the era of biology, with exponential discoveries taking place every day as researchers explore the potential of DNA to facilitate the development of new medical treatments and cures, to replace oil as the base component in industrial chemicals, to advance food security worldwide and even to serve as a means of digital data storage," said Emily M. Leproust, Ph.D., CEO of Twist Bioscience. "This innovative partnership with BioBricks Foundation truly sets the stage for widespread acceleration of research concepts for the public good."